

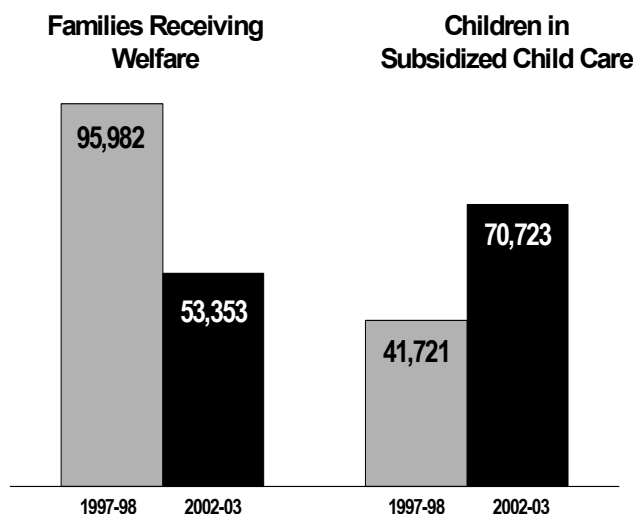
building BETTER LIVES

in District 1

Today, less than 2.3 percent of Washington's population receives welfare benefits. That's the lowest level in more than 30 years. From 1997 to 2003, the number of families on welfare has dropped 44 percent, from nearly 96,000 to less than 54,000.

While welfare rolls have gone down, the number of parents who have gotten jobs continues to rise. So we're **re-investing** the savings we've achieved into the things working parents need most to stay employed and get ahead in the job market. We've tripled the funds available to help struggling families afford **child care**. We've also boosted job training, work support, and tax credit education.

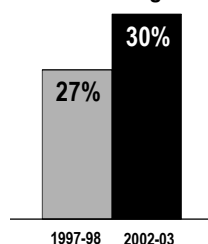
WorkFirst is Working!



? How many parents are going to work?
More than 125,000 Washington WorkFirst parents got a job between August 1997 and August 2003.

In District 1 alone, 869 parents got a job so they could provide for their family.

Percent of WorkFirst Parents Getting Jobs



"Since I've gotten my job, I'm doing things for my family that I can be proud of."

WorkFirst client

WorkFirst is a partnership of four state agencies:

- Department of Social and Health Services
- Employment Security Department
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Department of Trade and Economic Development

In addition, WorkFirst is a network of 32 local partnerships that include tribes, community organizations, community and technical colleges, workforce and economic development agencies, and individual citizens.

For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.workfirst.wa.gov

**A Job,
A Better Job,
A Better Life**

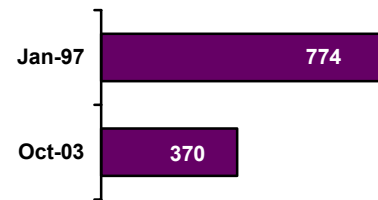
WorkFirst Facts:

? Are parents getting jobs and leaving welfare?

Yes. In January 1997, there were 95,982 families on public assistance in Washington. By October 2003, there were 53,353 on assistance – a 44 percent decrease.

In District 1, there were 774 families on public assistance in January 1997. By October 2003, there were 370, a **52.19 percent decrease**.

Families On TANF in District 1



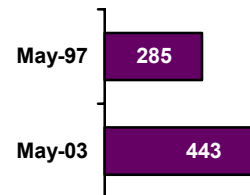
? How are working parents paying for child care?

Many are using Working Connections Child Care, a subsidy program for parents earning up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level – that's a monthly income of \$2,544 for a single parent with two children.

Parents contribute toward the cost of care based on a sliding scale with a monthly co-payment of at least \$15. In 1997-98, a monthly average of 41,721 children received a Working Connections Child Care subsidy. Five years later, 70,723 children were served, a 70 percent increase.

In District 1, there were 285 children receiving a child care subsidy in May 1997. In May 2003, 443 children were being served, a **55.43 percent increase**.

Children Served by Working Connections Child Care



? How much child support is collected to help these parents?

In the past year, almost \$286 million was collected statewide on behalf of custodial parents who are or have been receiving welfare.

In District 1, more than \$3,118,998 was collected.

? Is training and education available?

Yes. WorkFirst supports training and education for low-income parents working at least 20 hours per week, including those who have left the welfare rolls.

Last year **in your area**, 968 low-income parents enrolled in customized job skills trainings, which are specialized, short-term (up to 22 weeks) courses developed with specific employers who commit to giving first consideration to hiring those who complete the training. Another 393 low-income parents received free tuition at a community or technical college, 62 enrolled in high wage-high demand programs, and 123 took advantage of college work-study.

? What is WorkFirst doing to help parents get better jobs?

The Targeted Wage Initiative (TWI) and Targeted Job Search (TJS) are fresh approaches, which create opportunities for each WorkFirst parent to assess their employment interests and skills, and develop an individual plan to move beyond entry-level positions.

The purpose of TWI/TJS is to better prepare customers at the beginning of their job search to get the highest-paying wage the first time employed. Experience indicates that increasing the wage of entry-level jobs can positively affect parents' wage advancement over time.